



City of Arts & Innovation

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Senator Richard D. Roth Named Recipient of 2024 City Spirit Award

Retired State Senator praised for community involvement, commitment to Riverside

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Senator Richard D. Roth, who retired last year following a dozen years representing Western Riverside County in Sacramento, was named the recipient of the 2024 City Spirit Award Tuesday (6/24) evening.

Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson and the City Council presented Roth with the award at the evening portion of the City Council meeting. The award recognizes Riverside residents for extraordinary deeds and community spirit, good citizenship, and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the city.

“General Roth has been a force for good in Riverside for many decades, so I am very happy to see him recognized for his extraordinary service to our city,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “His devotion to our community and his intelligence have made him one of the most effective leaders I’ve ever known.”

Roth was first elected in 2012 to serve in the 31st State Senate District. He represented the area for the next 12 years, advocating for funding for the UC Riverside School of Medicine, strengthening workforce development, and expanding investments in higher education. He was instrumental in bringing the California Air Resources Board to Riverside, spurring additional economic development.

“If you look at major economic developments in Riverside during the past dozen years, Richard Roth was there, making a difference,” Mayor Pro Tem Sean Mill said. “He has paired that with continued service to our major institutions, providing much-needed guidance toward a better Riverside.”

Roth was hailed as the Inland area’s most effective legislator, introducing 36 bills in his final year in the Senate, and seeing 19 signed into law.

Roth’s civic involvement includes extended service on the board of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce, Riverside Community Hospital Advisory Board, La Sierra University Foundation, Riverside Art Museum (RAM), Parkview Community Hospital Board, and the Riverside Public Library Foundation Board, among others.

City Councilmember Philip Falcone, who nominated Roth, noted how unusual it is for Roth to have served on community boards in all seven council wards across the entire city. He also said Roth had a well-deserved reputation for working with people from all political parties while a Senator.

“You don’t do it for the cameras,” Falcone said. “You do it because it is the right thing to do.”

Though he was born in Columbus, Ohio, attended law school in Georgia and was stationed at numerous U.S. Air Force bases during a 32-year career, retiring as a Major General, Roth said he always has considered Riverside his hometown.

“To be recognized by one’s hometown is the ultimate recognition,” Roth said. “While I was not born here, Riverside is the only hometown I have ever known.”

Roth recalled that when he arrived in Riverside in 1978, “this community really adopted me.” He excelled in the legal profession, met his wife, Cindy, and began to take on leadership roles.

“During the past 47 years, I hope that I have been able to repay at least some of that huge debt of gratitude I owe to you and all the residents of this city,” he said.